

was contracted. There is no pretence that the bonds were not issued in strict conformity to law, and nothing to show that the holders of the bonds did not invest in them in good faith, believing them to be valid obligations of the State of Georgia. The fact that a large proportion of these bonds is in the hands of foreign owners is conclusive proof to the contrary.

Respecting the charge of Republican extravagance in Georgia a few words may be said. The Republican officials of that State were almost without exception natives of Georgia, and they were the peers in intelligence, social position and wealth of any who had held the offices before them. They were as much interested in the welfare of the State as any Democrats could be. Their crime was in being Republicans, and that had to be punished, even at the expense of the honor and credit of the State.

The facts that the three years of Republican administration under the late Governor, have raised the rate to five mills, and have abolished the exemption of property to the amount of \$200 for each taxpayer which was before abolished.

A Democratic legislative committee investigated the numerous charges of corruption and fraud which were made against the Republican Governor. The testimony taken during this investigation was used for political purposes, as well as to nourish the reputation of the Governor. It was then made the basis of a criminal prosecution of the Governor. After years of delay the case was brought to trial in a Georgia court, and all the witnesses who had testified before the committee were again examined. The result of the trial was a triumphant acquittal; but in the meantime the real purpose of the charges had been realized by the reputation of the debt. As the Governor had been personally responsible for all the alleged fraud and corruption of the Republican State administration, especially in regard to the supposed fraudulent issue of bonds to aid railroad companies, his acquittal by a Georgia court composed of Democrats is quite good evidence that the bonds were honestly and lawfully issued, and that the State is bound by every consideration of honesty and justice to pay them.

Like all the other Southern States, Georgia pleads poverty as another excuse for dishonesty. In order to justify this plea, property seems to have been assessed, especially in more recent years, at a small fraction of its value. In 1869 the assessed valuation of taxable property was \$207,000,000; in 1870 it was \$226,000,000, and the census valuation \$268,000,000; in 1872 the Controller estimated it at \$210,000,000; in 1875 it was \$261,000,000; in 1876 it was \$215,000,000; in 1877 it was \$253,000,000; and in 1878 it was \$223,000,000, or exactly what it was eight years before.

In 1870, according to the census report, the value of the agricultural productions of Georgia was \$55,000,000, but all the lands in the State, improved and unimproved, were assessed at only \$90,000,000 the same year. In 1878 the assessed valuation of land was but \$86,000,000. While the shock of repudiation has done much to depreciate the value of property in Georgia, it is hardly probable that it has caused a depreciation of nearly \$12,000,000 a year for the last three years, which it will be observed has actually been the rate of decrease in the valuation of property according to the Assessors' reports.

## VI. LOUISIANA.

The State debt and liabilities of Louisiana at the beginning of the war amounted to \$10,000,000. Of this amount \$2,302,000 had been incurred on account of six railroad companies. Two of these companies, which had together received \$532,000 in State bonds had not, it is said, built a single mile of railroad. In 1865, the debt and liabilities, excluding a debt of \$13,562,500 contracted in aid of the Rebellion, amounted to \$13,358,000; and in 1868, when the reconstructed State Government was inaugurated, to \$17,347,051. Of this last sum \$3,000,000 had been contracted to procure funds to repair levees damaged during the war, and to replace those destroyed; \$2,500,000 had been subscribed for railroad stocks; \$750,000 granted as a railroad subsidy; and \$3,000,000 of old floating debt and interest had been funded. Three years later (1871) the State Auditor reported the bonded debt at \$25,702,000, of which nearly \$7,000,000 were described as "contingent liabilities," for the payment of which corporations were primarily responsible. Besides the bonded debt there was "anticipatory" indebtedness, much of which had been incurred before the war, and which amounted to \$3,187,000. The total debt therefore for which the State was absolutely or contingently liable, amounted, in round numbers, according to this estimate, to \$29,000,000.

In his message of 1872 the Governor reported the interest-bearing debt at \$19,858,000, and the yearly interest charge at \$1,403,000. In 1870, an amendment to the State Constitution was adopted, which provided that the State debt should never exceed \$25,000,000 prior to the year 1880. The Legislature appears to have sought to evade this constitutional prohibition by making appropriations in excess of funds in the Treasury, and of current receipts. This attempt was defeated by the action of the Supreme Court, and the debt and the bonds of several issues were declared void. In a table of defaulting State debts, published November 14, 1874, the Financial Chronicle estimated the debt of Louisiana at \$24,433,000, all of which was in default on account of interest, and \$10,000,000 of which was estimated to be in the hands of foreign owners.

The large increase in the debt of Louisiana during the six years from 1868 to 1874, was mainly due to the issue of bonds to raise funds to build and repair levees, to aid in the construction of railroads, and to pay the ordinary and extraordinary expenses of the State Government. The bonds for levees and railroads were issued with the approval of both political parties, and the laws under which they were issued received the votes of Democrats as well as of Republicans in the Legislature. The question of using the credit of the State for these purposes was never regarded as a partisan one at that time. But it was openly charged by the Governor of the State that some of the acts granting State aid, which were passed over his veto, were carried by corrupt means. There is little room to doubt that many of these grants were jobs, and that for this one political party was as much responsible as the other, and it is certain that the Republican Governor did all he could to prevent it. The frequent political disturbances in the State made the execution of the laws very difficult, and the expenses of the State Government appear for this reason to have exceeded the amount received from taxation.

Statements of the contingent and floating debt of the State, and even of the bonded indebtedness, are so conflicting that one despairs of finding a trustworthy and accurate account. On January 1, 1875, the State Auditor reported the bonded indebtedness at \$21,872,320, warrants \$1,423,985, total \$23,296,305. But this statement was silent respecting \$5,488,002 of contingent indebtedness reported by him the previous year. Before this a grant of \$2,500,000 to the New-Orleans and Chattanooga Railroad had been declared void by the Supreme Court of Louisiana, and it is not known whether this sum was included in the contingent debt, as reported January 1, 1874, or not. In a statement made by Governor Kellogg, in 1875, he estimated "the bonded and floating debt, January 1, 1874, at \$24,832,407. The Financial Chronicle (January, 1877) estimated the total amount of obligations "issued" at \$27,185,433, and the amount "acknowledged" at \$11,807,155. It is probably quite safe to say that the Louisiana debt at its highest point did not much exceed, if it reached, \$27,000,000, and that the highest point was reached in 1874. This amount included all the forms of contingent liability incurred for internal improvements, money due the school and United States sur-

plus revenue funds, etc. The contingent debt was, to a greater or less extent, secured by liens on valuable railroad property. This form of indebtedness has long existed in Louisiana. So long ago as 1837 that State granted aid to railroads to the amount of \$1,200,000. Those loans, however, do not appear to have been secured by any property lien on the roads, which, indeed were not in existence at the time, if they ever were afterwards.

While there is no doubt that the debt contracted within the first six years after reconstruction was extravagantly large compared with the benefits derived, it did not greatly exceed the State debt at a period long anterior to the rebellion. The amount of that debt was reported by the Secretary of the Treasury in 1842, in response to a resolution of Congress, to be \$23,985,000. To this should be added \$937,000 on account of United States surplus revenue deposited with the State in 1837. This would make a total of \$24,922,000, a sum only \$2,378,000 less than the debt in 1874, which had been largely contracted to repair the damages and losses of the rebellion.

In 1873 Louisiana proposed a compromise with her creditors, and offered to fund the debt in new bonds bearing 7 per cent interest, for 60 per cent of the face of the old debt. A law to enforce this proposition was enacted in January, 1874. This law evoked sharp criticism from the holders of Louisiana bonds, and in reply to a letter from Governor Kellogg explaining the act and urging its necessity, a committee wrote, February 7, 1874, calling his attention to the fact that while the rate of taxation in New-York for State purposes was 34 mills in Louisiana it was but 23½ mills. Respecting the character of the Funding Law the committee said:

It is simply a proposition of a forced purchase from present holders at the rate of 60 cents on the dollar of the outstanding obligations of the State, which is perfectly able to discharge its obligations in full. The grant of such unnecessary and even wanton repudiation would be almost without parallel, and we cannot believe that the citizens of Louisiana will incur it, and thus destroy at once a well-earned character for scrupulous honesty, which their State has hitherto borne.

The law was carried into effect, notwithstanding the protests of the State's creditors; and by this act, for which Democrats and Republicans were alike responsible, the State of Louisiana repudiated two-thirds of its debt, and clothed itself with dishonor. The debt thus repudiated and established was then declared by a Constitutional amendment, adopted in May, 1874, to be "a valid contract between the State and each and every holder of said bonds, which the State shall by no means and in no wise impair." An interest tax of 5 mills was also established by the Constitution.

In June, 1875, Governor Kellogg reported the amount of the State debt to be \$21,279,000, and the yearly interest charge \$1,050,000. In October, 1877, an association of English capitalists proposed to lend the State \$12,950,000 on five per cent bonds running forty-five years, if the State would call in and pay off her outstanding debt. This proposition appears to have been called out by the expressions in favor of further repudiation, which began to multiply as soon as the Nichols Government was fairly installed. The offer was not accepted. The State Auditor reported, January 1, 1879, that the amount of bonds funded to date under the act of 1874 was \$19,550,122, for which new consolidated bonds to the amount of \$11,730,073 had been issued. There were still outstanding \$1,047,829 of old bonds and warrants. The Auditor estimated that when the funding operations were completed the debt would amount to \$12,136,166. He reported that there were outstanding old bonds, not fundable, amounting to \$3,971,000. According to this calculation the total debt, recognized and unrecognized, amounted to \$16,107,166. Among the bonds which were funded were \$441,000 issued in 1837 to the New-Orleans and Nashville Railroad Company in exchange for its stock. This road, it is declared, was never built.

A Constitutional Convention was called in January, 1879, to meet at New-Orleans in April, 1879, one of the purposes being to repudiate some more of the State debt. The more unauthorized avowal of this purpose caused a monetary panic and the suspension of several banks in New-Orleans, even before the convention assembled. These banks had made heavy investments in Louisiana securities, in consequence of the bond professions made by the Democrats when they gained political control of the State, that its credit should be preserved at any sacrifice. The refusal of property holders outside of New-Orleans to pay their taxes, and the apparent strength of the repudiation sentiment in the dominant party, sent Louisiana securities down on the run, and impaired the credit of some of the banks which had trusted to Democratic professions of honesty to such an extent that they were compelled to suspend payment. The strongest banks in the city were only saved from the same fate by hastily remittances from New-York, in response to appeals by telegraph for aid. A good many Northern and foreign capitalists were made the victims of misplaced confidence in the New-Orleans bankers. Many of them thought that the refusal to pay taxes was due to hostility to the Republican State administration, and that under the new regime taxpayers would promptly respond to the demands which all knew they were fully able to pay. Accordingly, Louisiana bonds which were quoted at 64 at the close of Governor Packard's administration, rapidly rose to 85. In March, 1879, they had declined to 48, and in July to 36. It has been discovered that hostility to Republican administration was only a pretence, and that the real hostility of Louisiana Democrats was to the payment of their honest debts.

In May, 1879, the State Auditor reported to the Constitutional Convention that the amount of taxes collected from 1870 to 1878 was \$18,329,169, and the amount of taxes due and unpaid for the same period was \$11,315,832, or about 38 per cent of the amount levied. The rate of taxation had varied from 23½ to 11 mills. The Committee on State Debt in the convention presented a majority and a minority report. The majority report recommended the repudiation of all but \$4,000,000 of the debt. The minority report advocated the payment of the entire debt, but recommended that the interest be reduced from 7 to 4 per cent. On June 20 the convention, by a vote of 85 to 28, limited the rate of taxation to 5 mills for all purposes. At this rate it would, of course, be impossible to pay the ordinary expenses of the State Government and have anything left with which to pay the interest on the public debt.

This action was afterwards reconsidered, and the convention adopted, July 21, an ordinance which is to be submitted to the people for ratification. This ordinance, which was passed by a vote of 73 to 41, recognizes the validity of the consolidated bonds, but repudiates the interest which will become due January 1, 1880, and also apparently the interest now overdue. No provision appears to have been made for the unfunded fund on the 1st of next January is to be used to pay the general expenses of the State Government. Hereafter instead of the 7 per cent interest guaranteed to the creditors of the State by the Constitutional amendment of 1874 they are to receive for the first five years two per cent; for the next fifteen years 3 per cent, and 4 per cent thereafter. Or they may surrender their 7 per cent bonds and receive 75 per cent of their face value in bonds bearing 4 per cent. The interest tax which was fixed at 5 mills by the Constitutional amendment adopted in 1874, is reduced to 3 mills. If the ordinance is adopted, as in all probability it will be, the amount out of which Louisiana will have cheated her creditors, as far as can be ascertained and estimated will be as follows:

Repudiated by act of 1874.	\$8,000,000
Old bonds and interest "not recognized."	6,750,000
1878 bonds.	1,379,000
Unpaid interest on recognized bonds to date.	1,730,000
Interest due January 1, 1880.	425,000
Repudiation of future interest by scaling.	12,021,000
Total.	\$29,115,000

For this disgraceful condition of affairs the Democratic party of Louisiana is responsible. After helping by their votes to create the debt, and being equally guilty with the Republicans in the repudiation of two-fifths of that debt, under the plea of poverty, the Louisiana Democrats have now set to work to complete the financial ruin and dishonor of their State. Every one of the repudiating propositions in the Constitutional Convention was brought

forward and advocated by Democrats. All the votes in favor of those propositions were cast by them, and the scheme finally adopted received none but Democratic votes. Every Republican member of the convention and an insignificant minority of Democrats members opposed it and voted against it. If this scheme is not ratified by the "people" of Louisiana it will be because a majority of the Democrats have determined to wipe out the whole debt. No proposition of decent honesty stands the ghost of a chance for success.

## VII. MISSISSIPPI.

The disgrace of repudiation was achieved by Mississippi when that State was under Democratic control, and long before "carpet-bag governments" were heard of in the South. The debt was contracted between 1830 and 1838, and amounted to \$7,000,000. With accrued interest it five-years-old amounted to \$23,000,000. It is estimated that five-sevenths of this are due to foreign creditors. Mississippi devoted all her available resources, including a sum of about \$500,000, to the aid of the Rebellion. In 1872, when the State was in Republican hands, some efforts were made by them to provide for the recognition and payment of the repudiated bonds, but the opposition of the Democrats was so fierce and powerful that nothing was done. There seems to be no prospect whatever that the people who trusted the honor and good faith of Mississippi, and bought her bonds, will ever recover any part of their investment.

## HUDSON COUNTY COMPLICATIONS.

ACTION OF THE BOARD OF FREEHOLDERS—THE FREE COMMISSIONERS OF JERSEY CITY IN DIFFICULTY.

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of Hudson County, met at the Court House in Jersey City, Thursday afternoon. The Board is composed of eight Republicans and eight Democrats, besides the Director-at-Large, Edward F. McDonald, the residing officer, who is also a Democrat. Mr. McDonald is a candidate for reelection, and it has been rumored for some days that in order to further his own personal ends he and some of his friends had arranged with some of the Republican and Democratic members to give some of the most important offices in the county to members of the former party. Yesterday a motion was made to choose a Warden for the County Almshouse, and Edward B. Jennings was elected to the position. Freeholder Gannon (Dem.) charged his brother Democrat, James Gannon, with making a "deal" with the Republicans. He made a motion to adjourn but it was voted down, and Joseph W. Barnes and Nicholas Pierce, both Republicans, were elected Warden and Deputy-Warden of the County Penitentiary respectively. Mr. Gannon then sprang to his feet in great excitement and protested against the action.

Another motion to adjourn was lost, and Philip Mulligan (Dem.) was made storekeeper of the county institutions. At Snake Hill, Edward Kelly (Dem.) was elected Superintendent of the County Groceries and Buildings, and Charles E. Hutton (Rep.) was made engineer of the Court House. When Freeholder Gannon charged his fellow Democrats with having made a deal with the Republicans, he was met by the Board of Freeholders, which consists of three Republicans and three Democrats, broke its dead lock two months ago and elected an organization of Commissioners. When the Board of Freeholders met, it was in the district for the organization, it is alleged by the Republican members of the Board that the Democrats promised to give each Republican the appointment of one of the members of the Board. At the meeting held Wednesday night Commissioner Ayres offered a resolution denouncing the position of the Board of Freeholders, and the Board of Freeholders, which consists of three Republicans and three Democrats, broke its dead lock two months ago and elected an organization of Commissioners. When the Board of Freeholders met, it was in the district for the organization, it is alleged by the Republican members of the Board that the Democrats promised to give each Republican the appointment of one of the members of the Board. At the meeting held Wednesday night Commissioner Ayres offered a resolution denouncing the position of the Board of Freeholders, and the Board of Freeholders, which consists of three Republicans and three Democrats, broke its dead lock two months ago and elected an organization of Commissioners. 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